



# Senator Gene Therriault 2002 Legislative Questionnaire

**T**hank you for filling out my 2002 legislative questionnaire. Out of 13,000 sent out we received over 1000 responses. The results are listed below.

## Budget

The "fiscal gap" — the difference between General Fund revenues and expenditures—remains Alaska's most significant fiscal issue. In the ten years since FY92, the state has relied on the Constitutional Budget Reserve (CBR) eight times to make up the difference. With the Governor's FY03 proposed General Fund spending of \$2.6 billion, the fiscal gap is projected to be approximately \$1 billion. The current CBR balance is about \$2.8 billion. On a scale of 1 to 5, please indicate your level of concern for Alaska's recurring budget shortfalls. (please circle one):

<b>(NOT)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>(VERY)</b>	<b>N/A</b>
	<b>6%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>45%</b>		<b>4%</b>

Should the CBR be used to balance the state budget, even if it means depleting it to near zero?

**YES - 29%**                      **NO - 64%**                      **N/A - 7%**

Would you support a constitutional amendment that would limit the annual growth of state government?

**YES - 68%**                      **NO - 27%**                      **N/A - 5%**

## Income Tax

To help close the fiscal gap, Gov. Knowles has introduced an income tax that is based on your federal tax liability. Assuming a four-person household with two children, a total income of \$65,000 and normal deductions, the household would owe the state roughly \$1,150.

Do you support an income tax to raise \$350 million?

**YES - 28%**                      **NO - 68%**                      **N/A - 4%**

Do you support a 3% state sales tax to raise \$300 million?

**YES - 48%**                      **NO - 48%**                      **N/A - 4%**

Do you support an increase in the alcohol tax to raise \$30 million?

**YES - 66%**                      **NO - 32%**                      **N/A - 2%**

## Homeland Security

Following the events of September 11, 2001, the Governor's new Terrorism Disaster Policy Cabinet (TDPC) has attempted to assess the potential threats of and responses to acts of terrorism in Alaska. The TDPC, via the Governor, is now proposing to spend \$102 million next year. Some feel this is a minimum investment to ensure the safety of Alaskans and its assets. Others suspect that this level of expenditure is neither cost-effective nor justified by realistic threats to Alaska.

On a scale of 1 to 5, how concerned are you about your personal safety as an Alaskan?

<b>(NOT)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5 (VERY)</b>	<b>N/A</b>
	<b>6%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>2%</b>

Following the September 11 terrorist attack, do you think more about your personal safety than you did a year ago?

**YES - 40%**                      **NO - 58%**                      **N/A - 2%**

If the Legislature approved a \$102 million homeland security package, do you think you would feel more safe than you do now?

**YES - 9%**                      **NO - 87%**                      **N/A - 4%**

## Permanent Fund

The Alaska Permanent Fund consists of the principal, which cannot be spent, and the earnings reserve account, which is used to pay dividends and inflation-proof the principal. Under current law, the legislature may appropriate the entire balance of the earnings reserve for any purpose. The Fund Trustees have proposed a constitutional amendment that will limit any appropriation from the earnings reserve to 5% of the five-year market average of the fund's total value.

Do you support an amendment limiting the amount of earnings that may be appropriated from the fund?

**YES - 63%**                      **NO - 28%**                      **N/A - 9%**

Do you think such an amendment should guarantee that any appropriation made from the fund include money for a dividend?

**YES - 53%**                      **NO - 34%**                      **N/A - 14%**

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## PFD Eligibility

Should Alaskans who are living overseas as volunteers in the Peace Corps be eligible to receive the Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend?

**YES - 64%**      **NO - 32%**      **N/A - 4%**

## Alaska Flag Song

The song "Alaska's Flag" is the official song of our state. The following second verse has been proposed:

A Native lad chose the Dip- per's stars; For Alaska's flag that there be no bars Among our cultures. Be it known Through years the Natives' past has grown To share life's treasures, hand in hand	To keep Alaska our Great Land; We love the northern, mid- night sky, The mountains, lakes, and streams nearby. The great North Star with its steady light Will guide all cultures, clear and bright,
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Should there be a second verse to the Alaska flag song?

**YES - 31%**      **NO - 57%**      **N/A - 12%**

## Minimum Wage

The November election may include a ballot initiative question to increase Alaska's minimum wage from \$5.56 to \$7.15 per hour, starting January 1, 2003. Each year after that the minimum wage would be adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index for Anchorage.

Should this initiative become law?

**YES - 55%**      **NO - 40%**      **N/A - 5%**

## Gas Line Permitting

To help construct a natural gas pipeline along the Alaska Highway to the Lower 48, the federal government has established a streamlined permitting process. Should the State of Alaska do the same?

**YES - 75%**      **NO - 15%**      **N/A - 10%**



**Senators Gene Therriault and Gary Wilken confer on a bill during a break on the Senate Floor.**

## "Hatred"

On a scale of one to five, do you think hatred in Alaska is not a serious problem or a very serious problem?

(NOT)	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5 (VERY)</b>	<b>N/A</b>
	<b>35%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>3%</b>

## Your Turn

What issues are important to you?

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## E-Mail Contact

If you would like to receive electronic updates from me regarding issues facing our state, please enter your e-mail address. I take your privacy seriously and will not share my e-mail list:

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